The Mirror

OF

LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

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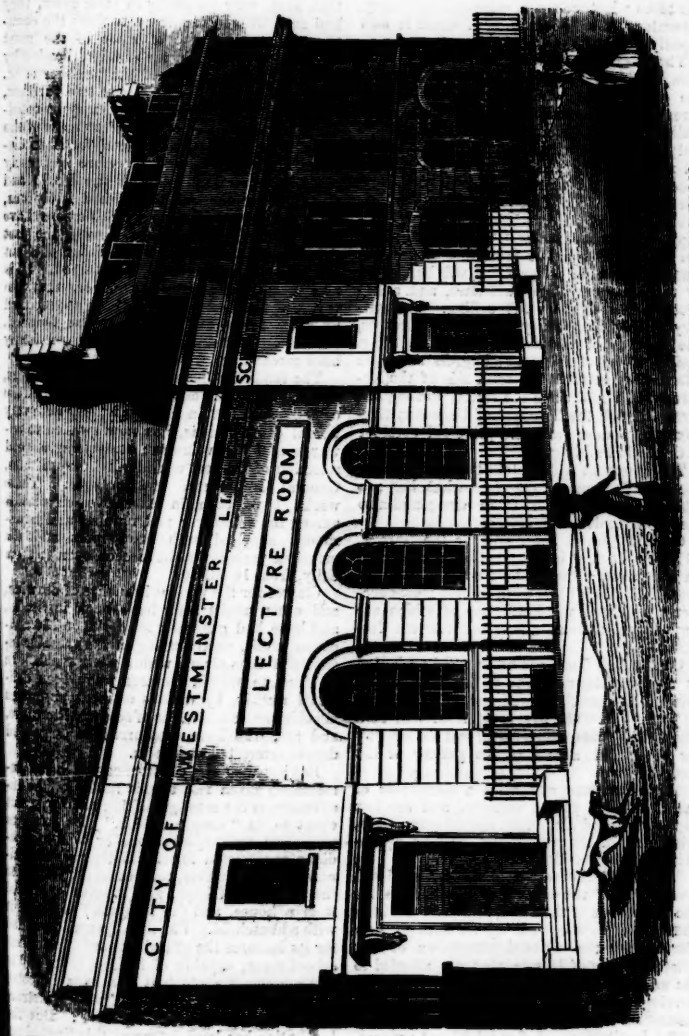

WESTMINSTER LITERARY, SCIENTIFIC, AND MECHANIC'S INSTITUTION, GREAT SMITH STREET.

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The funds that have accrued from members, subscriptions, and donations, have enabled the committee to form a library, which, with very liberal contributions, has now swelled to upwards of 3,000 volumes; comprising a good selection of the best works in History, Ethics, General Literature, and Science. These works have been in extensive circulation among the members; and reading and newsrooms, supplied with newspapers and the principal periodicals, have been open to them daily, from 10 till 10.

Classes for the various branches of drawing and other useful arts, have been instituted and have had generally from 100 to 130 assiduous pupils, participating in the valuable instruction thus placed within their reach. In addition to which, lectures have been delivered weekly, by various eminent professors in their respective walks of science, literature and art, who have discoursed to large and deeply-interested audiences.

But perhaps the occurrence which has immediately given rise to this notice of the Institution, is the most gratifying and important event in its "simple annals." Its founders originally contemplated one or two commodious apartments for transacting all its business; they, however, took courage, yielded to the impulses of hope, and eventually located it in a house, and (so to speak) endowed it with a household. For three years it has had for its lectures the gratuitous use of an infant school-room, capable of holding from 250 to 300 persons, for which it has been indebted to that well-known friend of public instruction, Benjamin Smith, Esq. M.P. But the Institution has long outgrown this limited a

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His Royal Highness Prince Albert has graciously condescended to become the Patron of the Institution; and the very liberal subscription-list opened to defray the cost of the building, presents many of the most noble and distinguished names of every shade of political opinion, and already amounts to upwards of 1,500*l*.

The first stone of the new building was laid on Thursday, July 31st, 1840, by the Rev. H. Milman, M. A., Vice-president; and we cannot better conclude this article than by presenting our readers with the brief extempore address delivered on the occasion by that accomplished divine.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—The Right Hon. the Speaker, President of the Institution, authorises me to state, that but for the imperative duties imposed upon him as the first Commoner, he would be present on this occasion. I should have rejoiced had that Right Hon. Gentleman been present to perform the ceremony in which I have just been engaged. I cannot, however, avoid thinking, that it is within my line of duty to attend that which is intended to promote the intellectual improvement of my friends and neighbours; more especially as I feel assured, that the stability of this great empire depends not only upon its intellectual—but with its intellectual, upon its moral advancement. To advance the intellectual is one very great subsidiary towards promoting the moral elevation of human beings. Contemplating the powers with which the CREATOR has endowed man—exemplified in our day by inventions that, in one sense, annihilate time and space, enabling individuals to travel by land or sea with the rapidity almost of lightning—I cannot but consider those powers to be given for wise and useful purposes. With this conviction, I consider it to be our bounden duty to cultivate them—to afford the *means of* cultivating them—and to take care that they may be employed wisely and usefully. In founding this Building—I feel assured my language will not be misunderstood—it is to be hoped that we are raising a permanent TEMPLE OF TRUTH for all classes and orders of society—to open to all, those stores of knowledge that have been heretofore, more peculiarly the privilege of the high-born and wealthy. In this temple of truth will be received worshippers from all classes: not for the purpose of merely gratifying idle curiosity, but to acquire a knowledge of the wonders around them, which, the more they are investigated, the more they will be found to bespeak the wisdom of the great FATHER of all. It is to be hoped that it will be the temple of PEACE as well as of truth. Far from this building be dissonant contentions and party strife! I trust that its members will calmly inquire, and amicably compare, in their efforts to arrive at truth—that truth which gives nerve to the mind;—that they will derive advantages beyond the mere hearing of lectures, or reading of books. It is, and by myself particularly, most fervently hoped, that all the proceedings in this temple will not only promote true knowledge, but also those feelings of brotherly love, which embody the true principles of our holy religion."

JACOB'S DREAM.

(*For the Mirror.*)

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder, set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."—*Genesis*, ch. 28, v. 12.

ALL softly fades the long, long summer's day,
And twilight gathers round the wanderer's way,
Weary and sad, the lonely man complains
To the pale stars that gleam o'er eastern plains.
From native scenes afar, by Jordan's shore,
His staff and scrip alone the exile bore.
Low moan'd the breeze, while echoes faintly broke,
From distant haunts of human-kind remote:
Sleep on the pilgrim's weary eyelids fell,
As the day closed around a grassy dell,
Where the sweet woods met in a solemn shade,
And glittering star-light thro' the branches played.
But while in "honey-dews" of slumber bound,
A stone his pillow on the verdant ground,
Came heavenly visions to his dreaming sight,
Cheering the silent watches of the night;
Behold from earth to heaven, a ladder rose,
And high above the purple skies unclose,
While streaming downwards from that distant height,
The opening gleam'd "intolerable light,"
And from their glorious home descending there,
Come troops of radiant angels, "bright and fair."
What beams of heaven upon the sleeper fell,
What pitying love,—no mortal tongue may tell!
Or how their seraph eyes of mercy spoke,
Or what high hopes upon his slumbers broke;
To future ages did those hopes extend,
With Israel's God, his promised Guide and Friend.
O Thou! who to the patriarch's dreaming eye
Opened the chrystal portals of the sky,
Still hovering near, let guardian spirits stray,
From evil still to guard life's devious way;
Reeching from heaven to earth, Thy mercy send,—
Sleeping and waking, round our being tend!

Kirton-Lindsey. ANNE R—.

SONG OF THE SUN.

(*For the Mirror.*)

I HAVE rais'd my head
From my ocean-bed
To scatter the frowns of night—
I have torn her robe
From the darksome globe,
And am here in the morning light!

My steeds are driv'n
To the high mid-heav'n,
And half of my course is run—
And I show'r from its height
Hot streams of light—
'Tis the hour of the scorching noon!

My task is o'er,
Yet I gaze once more
Ere the golden earth I leave,
And linger awhile
For a parting smile—
Then yield to the peaceful Eve!

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E. M.

THE LAST PRAYER OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

To the Editor,

It would please me to see the enclosed translation of the Prayer of Mary, printed on your page. You will observe that the number of the lines is exactly the same, that each line of the Latin is translated by the corresponding line of the English, that the translation is literal, and the metre the same. The original stands at p. 58, No. 1,016 of *the Mirror*.

The metre is shown best, I think, by reading two lines as one; the agreement of the metre may be shown thus:—

O	Lord God Most	High I have	trusted in	thee
O	*Domine*	*Deus sper*	*avi in*	*te*
O	Jesu be	lovéd now	bid me be	free
O	*care mi*	*Jesu nunc*	*libera*	*me*
Hard	fetters en	chain me and	miseries	pain me
In	*dura cat*	*ena in*	*misera*	*pœna*
While	longing for	thee		
De	*sidero*	*te*		
I	moan and I	languish and	kneeling in	anguish
Lan	*guendo ge*	*mendo et*	*genuflec*	*tendo*
Ad	ore thee im	plore thee to	bid me be	free
Ad	*oro impl*	*oro ut*	*liberes*	*me*

TRANSLATED.

O Lord God Most High!
I have trusted in thee;
O Jesu belovéd!
Now bid me be free.
Hard fetters enchain me,
And miseries pain me,
While longing for thee.
I moan and I languish,
And, kneeling in anguish,
Adore thee—implore thee,
To bid me be free.

J. Ogle.

ANCIENT BRITISH REMAINS.*

Upright Stones or Obelisks.—In many parts of England are found large upright stones, termed by antiquarians obelisks or pillars. One of the largest in this country is situated in the north-west corner of the churchyard of Rudstone village, in the East Riding of Yorkshire. This stone tapers in form, is about twenty-four feet high, and its base is twenty-four feet beneath the surface of the ground, thus making a total of forty-eight feet. Its width is about six feet, and it is two feet six inches in thickness. There is no tradition or record in the neighbourhood respecting the cause or time of its erection. Higgins imagines that the name of the village, Rudstone or Rhudstone, is derived from the stone being of a red sandy colour.

Cromlechs or Druidic Altars.—Another species of monument of the ancient Britons is the cromlech or druidical altar. These are found in great number and variety in Ireland, Wales, and some parts of England, particularly Cornwall. One of the most celebrated is Kit's Cotty House, in Kent. This cromlech is situated about four miles from Maidstone, on the downs, and is composed of four stones, three of which support a large flat stone on the top, forming a sort of open room beneath. Some have supposed this monument to be a druidical altar; others, that it was erected to the memory of an ancient British king. They were most likely used for sacrificial purposes.

Carved Rocks.—Besides their stone pillars and cromlechs, the druids sometimes cut down huge rocks into fantastic shapes, such as the Cheese-ring in Yorkshire, and the Hurlers, in Cornwall. In the eastern part of the Isle of Purbeck in the county of Dorset, between Poole and Swanwich, is a large stone called Agglestone. This stone weighs about ninety tons, and is placed upon the top of a large barrow, about seventy feet high, which was probably erected to the memory of some British chief, who fell in the neighbourhood.

* Considerably abridged from the current number of the Polytechnic Journal.

The Tolmen, or Hole of Stone.—Dr. Borlase describes one of these, situated in the Tenement of Men, in the county of Cornwall. It is a huge stone of one vast egg-like shape, placed upon two smaller stones, on the top of a hill, leaving room beneath for devotees to pass through.

Cairns of Scotland.—These appear to have been used as burial places of the ancient inhabitants, and on their tops fires are lighted on St. John's eve, and other festive occasions. At New Grange, in Ireland, is a large cairn or tumulus, which occupies nearly a quarter of a mile of ground in circumference. It is composed of stones which, according to the local historians, must have been brought upwards of eighty miles. The interior of this cairn contains various galleries and passages, in which are several wide stones, sculptured with symbolical representations of the Deity. This singular relic bears traces of the remotest origin.

Vitrified Forts.—These most remarkable monuments in the Highlands of Scotland appear to have been erected for protection, and are composed of calcined stones united by heat, thus forming solid compact walls.

Round Towers.—These singular monuments are found in many parts of Ireland; they are composed of masonry, and rise from the ground in a circular tapering form, sometimes to the height of more than 100 feet. Two towers of similar form and construction exist in Scotland. Much research has been employed on these; some have imagined they were bell-towers; others, that they were pillars for devotees similar to that used by Simon Stylites; it is also conjectured they were receptacles for the sacred fire, which, it is supposed, the ancient inhabitants of Ireland worshipped in the same manner as the Persians.

Druidic Temples.—These monuments of the ancient Britons are generally composed of ovals or circles of stones, varying from twelve in number up to several hundreds. It is a curious fact that the entrance to these temples always faces the north-east. One of the largest of these druidical temples in this country is situated at Abury or Avebury, near Marlborough, in Wiltshire. This temple, which is one of the most singular and gigantic works ever designed by the mind of man, is composed of 650 stones, and extends over nearly 2¼ miles of ground. It is surrounded by a large mound of earth, and is in the form of a snake with wings; or a long circle, from which branch two long avenues of stones. At the commencement of one avenue is a smaller circle of 30 stones, forming a sort of head to the serpent. The great circle or body of the snake is composed of 100 stones, and contains two smaller circles within its area, of 30 stones each, with pillars or obelisks in the centre. It is to be regretted that this singular structure, which formed such a splendid memorial of the religion of our British ancestors, is now almost wholly destroyed, from the wanton barbarity of the inhabitants of a contemptible village which is situated within its circumference. The design and form of this splendid temple would altogether have been lost, but for the perseverance and ingenuity of Dr. Stukely, who, more than 100 years since, investigated its plan, and discovered its form and character. Few stones are now left; and in 1837, a traveller states that the barbarian inhabitants were employed in the task of setting fire to the stones, and employing them to build their cottages and mend the roads.

Temple at Stonehenge.—This has been so often treated of, that we shall only briefly refer to it. This temple is composed of two circles and two ovals. The outer circle, which is composed of thirty stones, about seventeen feet in height, supports thirty stones as imposts, which are laid horizontally on the top. The next circle is composed of forty stones, varying from five to seven feet in height. Within this circle are placed five *tritithens* (or two pillars supporting an impost) which are nearly twenty-five feet high, and within this oval is a smaller oval of nineteen stones, about eight feet in height. It is generally supposed to have been erected for astronomical purposes,—undeniably for theological. Many of the stones are now fallen, and the whole temple presents a picture "majestic though in ruins."

Tumuli or Barrows.—There are a variety of sepulchral mounds or barrows in this country. The druidical barrows of the ancient Britons, vary both in size and shape, from mounds scarcely elevated above the ground, to hills of more than 100 feet in height. The largest and most interesting barrow in England is Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, situated about five miles from Marlborough. According to Sir Richard Colt Hoare, who employed a surveyor in 1812 to ascertain its dimensions, it is 2,027 feet in diameter; at the top it measures 120 feet; its sloping height is 316 feet; its perpendicular height 170 feet; and it stands upon five acres and thirty-four perches of land. Dr. Stukely conjectures that it is a barrow erected to the memory of some ancient British chief.

Shapes of Barrows.—Oblong barrows, which are but slightly raised above the surface, some of which are as long as 400 feet, are supposed to be the earliest species of grave in this country, as they contain but few bones and relics. Some of the barrows scattered over our down-lands are in the shape of inverted bowls. Others are bell-shaped, and, from their exhibiting great skill and workmanship, it is evident that they belonged to an age of more improved manners. The class termed by the antiquaries Druid barrows, are the most elegant of this series of graves, and they appear to have contained females, from finer trinkets and smaller bones having been found in their interiors.

Deposits of Tumuli or Barrows.—In the British barrows are found weapons of war and hunting, ornaments of a rude kind, and even articles of jewelry, with sometimes relics of dogs and deer mingled with human bones, as

also urns of unbaked clay, large bones and horns of deer.

Anniversary Honours were held at these tombs of the ancient Britons, and at the present day, we frequently meet with relics of the festivals of the Celtic inhabitants of our country at barrows. Upon every Whitsun Wednesday a festive meeting is held at a great barrow called Capel Tump, in Herefordshire; and a similar meeting is held upon a large barrow on Shipley Hill.* An annual court is held at Culliford barrow, on a high ridge near Weymouth, in Dorsetshire.

Thus, these lone monuments, which lie scattered over the barren heaths of our native land, prove that man, in an infant state of society, was the same being in feelings and passions, as the more refined inhabitants of the nineteenth century. The earliest efforts of uncivilized nature were records of human action and suffering; and thus patriotism, piety, and friendship have left their impress on the grey stone, the rude altar, and the earthern mound.

A SCULPTURED CORPSE.

At Penshurst, in Kent, there is to be seen a strange little model of a corpse in a grave. All the circumstances of the scene are moulded with curious fidelity: the damp and slime of the dungeon; the worms crawling in and out of the putrifying carcass, the rats frisking and feeding upon it, are all horribly natural, and in the midst of the fine pictures among which it stands, the spectator's attention is often called away to it, although he is surrounded by subjects that are far more worthy of remark.

VINES AND PEACH TREES AMONG GRAVES.

The vine is not only a most gross feeder, but a very ghoul among graveyards. Rioting amid the charnel house, it would seem well fitted for bearing the grapes from which might be crushed the "coal black wine" that filled the cup of "King Death." But the vine is not the only fruit-tree which revels in such deadly diet. Upon the exhumation of the remains of the hapless André, in the field, immediately over his remains, there flourished, most luxuriantly, a small peach-tree, which had been planted at the head of the grave by the kindly feeling of a lady in the neighbourhood. On disinterment of his remains, the roots of the small peach-tree had completely surrounded the skull like a net. This uprooted tree, though carefully removed to a garden, and there tended with pious care, in the hope of preserving it for the sisters of André, drooped, however, and died away. Plants, indeed, in general, grow no where more vigorously than amid graves, drawing their nourishment from sources which can hardly be contemplated by the sensitive without a shudder. We need only advert to the legend of Lisabetta and Lorenzo—a story to which neither the elegant and pathetic prose of Boccacio, nor the harmonious verses of Dryden, could ever reconcile us.

* Stukeley's Itin., vol. i., p 801.

ASTONISHING MENTAL POWERS OF THE BLIND.

The phenomena of mind are at all times interesting, and many curious theories have been started on the value of the different senses. We see that the loss of one sense may be compensated by the superior intensity and perfection of the remaining organs; and, as Nature ever designs well, if she chance, in some respects, to fail in her good intentions, she generally takes care, in others, to atone for such deficiencies. "Where the mind is properly constituted," says Lieut. Holman, "the diminution of one faculty naturally calls others into more extensive action; in short, there are few obstacles which man's perseverance may not enable him to overcome, if he will but rightly exercise those faculties with which the beneficence of his Creator has endowed him:" and, among the many proofs of the truth of this sightless traveller's opinion, wonderful, nay, almost incredible as they appear, the following extraordinary case of Laura Bridgman, an American girl, about ten years of age, blind and deaf, and almost bereft of the sense of smell, now being brought up in the Boston (U. S.) Institution for the Blind, is certainly not the least remarkable. The *Athenæum* of May 30, 1840, was the first work that called the public attention to this interesting child, in noticing Dr. Julius's "Remarks on Laura Bridgman, endowed with only one sense."

At a meeting of the Central Society of Education, June 24th last, T. Wyse, Esq., M. P. in the chair, the following narrative, extracted from the official Reports of the Trustees of the Boston Institution of the Blind, for the years 1839 and 1840 was read; it is Dr. Howe's account of the order of development and the peculiar character of the intellectual faculties of this child:—

Laura Bridgman was then thirteen years old, and had been about two years in the establishment:—"Having mastered the manual alphabet of the deaf mutes, and learned to spell readily the names of everything within her reach, she was then taught words expressive of positive qualities, as hardness, softness; and she readily learned to express the quality, by connecting the adjective hard or soft with the substantive; though she generally followed what one would suppose to be the natural order in the succession of ideas, placing the substantive first. It was found too difficult, however, then to make her understand any general expression of quality, as hardness, softness, in the abstract. Indeed, this is a process of mind most difficult of performance to any, especially to deaf mutes. One of her earliest sentences, after learning the adjectives,

was this—she had found the matron ill, and understood that her head pained her, so she said, '*Smith head sick—Laura sorry.*' Next she was put to the positive expression of relation to place, which she could understand. For instance, a ring was taken and placed *on* a box, then the words were spelt to her, and she repeated them from imitation. Then the ring was placed *on* a hat, and a sign given her to spell, she spelt, *ring on box*—but being checked, and the right words given, she immediately began to exercise her judgment, and, as usual, seemed intently thinking. Then the same was repeated with a bag, a desk, and a great many other things, until at last she learned that she must name the thing *on* which the article was. Then the same article was put *into* the box, and the words ring *in* box given her; this puzzled her for many minutes, and she would make mistakes; for instance, after she had learned to say correctly, whether the ring was *on* or *in* a box, a drawer, a hat, a bucket, &c., if she were asked where is house, or matron, she would say *in* box. Cross-questioning, however, is seldom necessary to ascertain whether she really understands the force of the words she is learning, for when the true meaning dawns upon her mind, the light spreads to her countenance. In this case the perception seemed instantaneous, and the natural sign by which she expressed it was peculiar and striking; she spelt *o, n*, then laid one hand *on* the other; then she spelt *i, n, t, o*, and enclosed one hand *within* the other. Some idea of the difficulty of teaching her common expressions, or the meaning of them, may be formed from the fact, that a lesson of two hours upon the words *right* and *left* was deemed very profitable, if she in that time really mastered the idea. No definite course of instruction can be marked out, for her inquisitiveness is so great, that she is very much disconcerted if any question which occurs to her is deferred until the lesson is over. It is deemed best to gratify her, if her inquiry has any bearing on the lesson, and often she leads her teacher far away from the objects he commenced with. * * In her eagerness to advance her knowledge of words, and to communicate her ideas she coins words, and is always guided by analogy. Sometimes her process of *word-making* is very interesting; for, instance, after some time spent in giving her an idea of the abstract meaning of *alone*, she seemed to obtain it, and understanding that being *by one's self* was to be alone, or *al-one*, she was told to go to her chamber, or school, or elsewhere, and return *alone;* she did so, but soon after wishing to go with one of the little girls, she strove to express her meaning thus, Laura go *al-two*. The same eagerness is manifested in her attempts to define for the purpose of classification: for instance, some one giving her the word bachelor, she came to her teacher for a definition, she was taught that men who had wives were *husbands*, those who had none *bachelors;* when asked if she understood, she said, '*man no have wife, bachelor—Tenny, bachelor,*' referring to an old friend of hers. Being told to define bachelor, she said, '*bachelor, no have wife, and smoke pipe.*' Thus she considered the individual peculiarity of smoking in one person, as a specific mark of the *species bachelor*. * * She easily acquired a knowledge and use of active verbs, especially those expressive of *tangible action*, as to walk, to run, to sew, to shake. At first, of course, no distinction could be made of mood and tense, she used the words in a general sense, and according to the order of her *sense of ideas;* thus, in asking some one to give her bread, she would first use the word expressive of the leading idea, and say, '*Laura, bread, give.*' Having acquired the use of substantives, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, it was deemed time to make the experiment of trying to teach her to *write*, and to show her that she might communicate her ideas to persons not in contact with her. It was amusing to witness the mute amazement with which she submitted to the process, the docility with which she imitated every motion, and the perseverance with which she moved her pencil over and over again in the same track, until she could form the letter. But when at last the idea dawned upon her, that by this mysterious process, she could make other people understand what she thought, her joy was boundless. Never did a child apply more eagerly and joyfully to any task than she did to this, and in a few months she could make every letter distinctly, and separate words from each other. * * She has the same fondness for dress, for ribbons, and for finery as other girls of her age; and as a proof that it arises from the same amiable desire of pleasing others, it may be remarked that whenever she has a new bonnet or any new article of dress, she is particularly desirous to go to meeting, or to go out with it. If people do not notice it, she directs their attention by placing their hand upon it. Generally she indicates her preference for such visitors as are the best dressed. She is so much in company with blind persons that she thinks blindness common; and when first meeting a person she asks if they are blind, or she feels one of their eyes. She evidently knows that the blind differ from seeing persons; for when she shows blind persons anything, she always puts their fingers on it.*

* Keen susceptibility of touch, is the great boon of the Almighty to the blind; the most astonishing instance, perhaps, on record, is that of the celebrated Miss *Margaret M'Avoy*, of Liverpool, who could, by passing her fingers over stained glass, name the colour of the various parts: she could also read the title of a book, by the same means, name the colour of any person's dress; tell the hour and minutes through the watch-glass; and, however mysterious it may appear, it is most indisputably true, she ascertained objects at a distance, by simply stretching out the fingers on the window in the direction of such objects. Many other instances might be given of the extraordinary power of touch, possessed by the blind; but we shall merely mention *John Gambasius*, of Voltera, a sculptor, who

"Laura is familiar with the processes of addition and subtraction in small numbers. Subtracting one number from another puzzled her for a time, but by help of objects she accomplished it. She can count and conceive objects to about one hundred in number—to express an indefinitely great number, or more than she can count, she says, *hundred*. If she thought a friend was to be absent many years, she would say—will come hundred *Sundays* —meaning weeks. She is pretty accurate in measuring time, and seems to have an intuitive tendency to do it. Unaided by the changes of night and day, by the light, or the sound of any timepiece, she nevertheless divides time accurately. With the days of the week, and the week itself as a whole, she is perfectly familiar; for instance, if asked her what day will it be in fifteen days more, she readily names the day of the week. The day she divides by the commencement and end of school, by the recesses, and by the arrival of mealtimes. She goes to bed punctually at seven o'clock, and of her own accord. For some time after she came under our charge, she had some one to put her to bed every night; but soon it was thought best to send her alone, and that she might not wait for any one, she was left alone one evening, and she sat until quite late, a person watching her; and at last she seemed to form her resolution suddenly—she jumped up, and groped her way up to bed. From that time to this, she has never required to be told to go to bed; but at the arrival of the hour for retiring, she goes by herself. * * The sense of smell being destroyed, it seems a curious question whether the effect upon the organ of taste is general or particular,—that is, whether the taste is blunted generally, and for all things alike, or whether one kind of sapidity is more affected than another: to ascertain this, some experiments have been tried, but as yet, not enough to enable one to state confidently the results in minute distinction. The general conclusions are these:—Acids seem to make vivid and distinct impression upon the taste; and she apparently distinguishes the different degrees of acidity, better than of sweetness or bitterness. She can distinguish between wine, cyder, and vinegar, better than substances like manna, liquorice, and sugar. Of bitters she seems to have less perception, or, indeed, hardly any. * * With regard to the sense of touch, it is very acute—even for a blind person. It is shown remarkably in the readiness with which she distinguishes persons; there are forty inmates in the female wing, with all of whom, of course, Laura is acquainted: whenever she is walking through the passage-ways, she perceives by the jar of the floor, or the agitation of the air, that some one is near her, and it is exceedingly difficult to pass her without being recognised. Her little arms are stretched out, and the instant she grasps a hand, a sleeve, or any part of the dress, she knows the person, and lets them pass on with some sign of recognition. The innate desire for knowledge, and the instinctive efforts which the human faculties make to exercise their functions, are shown most remarkably in Laura. Her tiny fingers are to her as eyes, and ears, and nose, and most deftly and incessantly does she keep them in motion; like the feelers of some insects which are continually agitated, and which touch every grain of sand in the path, so Laura's hands and arms are continually in play; and when she is walking with a person, she not only recognizes everything she passes within touching distance, but by continually touching her companion's hands, she ascertains what he is doing. A person walking across a room while she had hold on his left arm, would find it hard to take a pencil out of his waistcoat pocket with his right hand without her perceiving it. Her judgment of distances, and of relations of place is very accurate: she will rise from her seat, go straight towards a door, put out her hand just at the right time, and grasp the handle with precision. * * At table, if told to be still, she sits and conducts herself with propriety; handles her cup, spoon, and fork, like other children; so that a stranger looking at her would take her for a very pretty child with a green ribbon over her eyes. But when at liberty to do as she chooses, she is continually feeling things, and ascertaining their size, shape, density, and use—asking their names and their purposes, going on with insatiable curiosity, step by step, towards knowledge. Thus does her active mind, though all silent and darkling within, commune by means of her one sense with things external, and gratify its innate craving for knowledge by close and ceaseless attention. Qualities and appearances, unappreciable or unheeded by others, are to her of great significance and value; and by means of these, her knowledge of external nature and physical relations will in time become extensive."

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having felt all over a marble statue of Cosmo de Medicis, he made one of clay, so like it as to astonish everybody who saw it. De Piles states, he saw in Italy a blind man, full of genius and intelligence, who modelled in wax, a statue of Minerva, discovering the forms and proportions by the touch. *William Keasedy*, of Wishorn, in the county of Down, who, although deprived of sight, made bagpipes, and afterwards clocks, and musical, and other watches, by instruments solely of his own manufacture: he could also tell the colour of ivory, ebony, and all the varieties of wood, by the touch. As we before remarked, numberless other instances might be adduced; but, for want of space, the above must suffice.—*Ed. M.*

Danger of a little Learning.—As by the culture of a field, you render the surface-soil more prone to receive and foster either the useless thistle-down or the generous wheat, so by only a little learning, you open the mind to the insinuations of the obscene and dangerous publications of the day, which to the vulgar acceptances, are apt to appear more amusing, at the first glance, than the revelations of Scripture.—*Sandron Hall, or the Days of Queen Anne.*

ALLOWAY CHURCH-YARD;

WITH THE TOMB OF THOMAS REID, THE PROTOTYPE OF "TAM O'SHANTER."

Every incident, however trivial, tending to illumine the writings of that inspired national poet, the delightful "Lowland Ossian,"—Robert Burns—he who once described himself to his *countrymen* (and can they *now* read the words without barren shame and passionate remorse!) as "*half-mad, half-fed*, and *half-sarkit*,"*—must at all times be cherished with undying affection. Fully impressed with this feeling, we present to the reader that unassuming, yet most endearing spot, in all Scotia's land, rendered immortal by the beautiful simplicity and pathos of Burns' peerless verse—"*Alloway's auld haunted kirk*,"—the scene of his most impassioned poem of "Tam o'Shanter."

Alloway Kirk, or, as it is mostly written, Kirk Alloway, exhibits nothing but the naked roofless walls of a Scot's country church, and is not much larger than a common-sized barn. Its little enclosed burial-ground must always demand the pilgrim's attention. Upon the whole, the spectator is struck with the idea that the witches must have had a rather narrow stage for the performance of their revels, as described in Burns' poem. "Within the last few years," says Chambers, "the old oaken rafters of the kirk were mostly entire, but they have now been entirely taken away, to form, in various shapes, memorials of a place so remarkably signalized by genius. It is surprising with what interest every visitor to the real scene will inquire into, and behold every part that can be associated, however remotely, with the poem of Tam o'Shanter. The church-yard contains several old monuments, of a very humble description, together with some modern ones: among the most interesting are those of the father of Burns, and of Thomas Reid, a rough-spun Carrick farmer, who was in the habit of wearing a broad blue bonnet, riding a sturdy white mare, and getting regularly drunk at all the fairs and markets held within forty miles round. Shanter is a farm on the Carrick shore, near Kirkoswald, which Reid long possessed. This man was in sober, or, rather, drunken truth, the "bletherin', blusterin', blellum," that the poet has described; and his wife was as a lady, the "sulky, sullen dame," who most anxiously discouraged drinking in her husband. Burns, when a boy, spent much of his time with this Thomas Reid, and his brother-in-law, the farmer of Duwhat, both of whom used to visit Burns' uncle, a miller, who sold home-brewed ale; and these persons gave the poet a real knowledge of the Carrick farmer. One of their boozing companions was a cobbler, near Maybole, who was also the constant associate of Thomas Reid, he was

> "His ancient trusty, drouthy crony;
> Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
> They had been fou* for weeks thegither."

It was from this cobbler and Thomas Reid, that Burns drew his heart-stirring characters of "Tam o'Shanter, and Souter† Johnny."

The picture there given of the dissolute manners of the Carrick farmers, is generally allowed in Ayrshire to have been by no means overcharged. It is even said to have been by no means an unfrequent occurrence, at the farm of Shanter in particular, for the servants to be so stupid with liquor, as to boil the brandy for the meals instead of water; a mistake the more natural, because all the domestic vessels were occasionally put in requisition, to hold the generous fluids which had been hastily transferred from on board the smugglers' luggers.

* Half-sh thed, or, rather half-shirted.

* Inebriated. † Cobbler.

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BABELON,*

"THE GOLDEN CITY—ABUNDANT IN TREASURE."

Down to the Time of Cyrus.

THE mind is a mighty mirror, having a surface broader than the Creation, and which, though possessed of no visible area, or supportive platform, bears, oftentimes, bulks of most mountainous dimensions. Thus, may a man, by virtue of its reflective powers, support, perhaps, upon its surface, and at the same instant, images of Babylon, Thebes, Persepolis, and a score of other cities. Samson, as his mightiest feat, bore no more than the gates of Azza; but the mind, more powerful than a thousand Samsonidæ, bears aloft Thebes with its *hundreds* of gates—Babelon with its myriads of towers—Persepolis with its massiest masonries, all at once, and by no stronger effort than the voluntary straining of its intellectual nerves and sinews—bears them aloof, and transports them from one earth-zone to another, or hurls down at will, their conglobated load, upon a sheet of foolscap, royal, or demy.

Babelon—Thebes—Persepolis—each great, but none greater than the first! Gorgeous Babelon; while thy huge and ominous shadow spreads over my mind, I hasten to paint the successions of thy greatness, and to transfer the history of thy grandeurs to my page.

Centuries are creators of vasty changes—changes of which the short-lived children of men hear only by dim-voiced traditions. Thou, portly King Belus, of Assyrian kings the first, I would that thou answeredst me a question. Before the sutures of thy infantine skull had closed, or thy baby-brow assumed the airiest notion of Assyria's round of sovereignty, how looked the plain whereon afterward stood bulky Babylon, as it arose in build and blazonry devised by thee? Why, when in thy purple long-clothes, and silver rattle in thy hand, thy nursing-mother took thee morning-walks upon the open plain of Shinar, it was then nothing but a league of level greensward, shaded here and there, by palms filled with fruit and singing-birds. The old cedars in the distance, waved pleasantly their dark-green heads, unscathed by the axe-man, for, as yet, thou hadst not dreamed of building thyself palaces, "ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion." The acanthi and amarynthia of Shinar's plain sufficed thy little fancy—the prattle of the birds was pleasanter to thine ear, than the clank of the stone-mason's hammer, or reverberations of the woodsman's hatchet, and the blue sky over thy princely little head, was more acceptable to thy sight, than any dome of splendour.

But the scene changed with thy changing years. No sooner had the purple beard-down of thy manhood appeared, than quarries were delved—forest cedars laid open to the sun—bricks baked in the furnace—bitumen wells opened—and thou, and after thee, Ninus and Semiramis, didst and did labour to heap all that quiet green plain of Shinar, with imperial piles and stately structures. Walls were rolled out, prodigious in circuit, till the earth groaned beneath their stony masses—towers arose, that by their proximity, threatened the heavens, and the glassy waters of the great Euphrates, reflected hosts of huge red palaces, that glistened with strange glory in its depths. Babelon had now become, "The Golden City, abundant in treasures."

Touching upon the state of this famous city, there exists in the Spanish language, a poem written in pure Castilian, (by Juan Lorenzo, a clerk of Astorga, who wrote towards the year 1280) describing Babelon as it was in the time of Alexander the Great, that being the title of his poem. Some of its lines have a dreamy beauty, and run in "long-drawn sweetness":—

BABYLON.

It stands in a salubrious spot, well planted in a clime,
Nor misty with the vernal rain, nor chilled by winter rhime;
In all rich bounties bountiful beyond desire, and Time
Has with the gifts of many an age still stored it from his prime.
The folk that in that city bide, wan sickness hurteth ne'er;
There the choice gum and balsams be, and spice beyond compare;
Of cassia, frankincense, and myrrh, the place is nothing spare,
Nor of the nutmeg, or the clove, or spikenard much more rare.
The very trees give odours forth so sweet that they dispel,
Or strip disease of all its force;—the people there that dwell
Are of a right good tint, and men may soothly swear that well
The tribes that journey far and near perceive the pleasant smell.
The three most holy rivers flow near, beneath whose streams,
O many a pearl and precious stone of richest virtue gleams;
Some that all night illumine earth with their resplendent beams,
And some that to the sick give strength, when dead the patient seems.
And all throughout the city, dance fountains fresh and gay,
Lukewarm in the cold morning, and cool at noon of day;
Within them neither asp nor snake is ever born, for they
Right healthful are, and very clear, and never know decay.
And founded on a spacious plain, most pleasant was the site,
Rich in all kinds of game wherein the hunter takes delight,
By verdant mountains compassed round, by nibbling flocks made white,
Well tempered pass'd the vernal day, and well the winter night.
There fly the brilliant loorie, and the curious parqueete,
That sometimes even men of brain with their sage cunning beat;
And when the lesser birds too sing, the mothers, well I weet,
Forget their own dear babies in listening sounds so sweet.

* Babel, and On, a city—the City of Babel—Babelon: this, according to the Chaldee, is the right orthography, but with the Greeks, it becomes βαβυλων, i. e. Babylon.

The men are men of substance, and generous in their pride;
They all go robed in garments with goodly colours dyed;
Caparisoned sleek palfries and ambling mules they ride,
And the poor, in satin and in silk, go marching at their side.

Built by a rare good master, were the palaces so vast,
Well measured by the quadrant and the timbers mortised fast;
With marvellous care and labour, were the deep foundations cast,
Strong to withstand the fire and flood, the earthquake and the blast.

The gates were all of marble, native marble pure and white,
All shining like fine crystal, and brave as they were bright
With sculptured work; the quarter that soared to greatest height
Was the king's own home, and kingly it might be termed of right.

Four hundred columns had they, those mansions every one,
With base and capital of gold, reflecting back the sun,
Had they been polished braziers, they could not more have shone,
Their parts so well the chisel and burnisher had done.

There, too, was music chanted to the harp and pastoral quill,
The quavers soothing sorrow, and the trebles rising shrill,
The mild flute's grieving pathos, and the lute's ecstatic trill,
Of all, except the very deaf, entranced the captive will.

There is not in the world a man that fitly can declare,
The perfect sweetness and delight that filled all places there;
For whilst in that fair Edeu a mortal lived, he ne'er
Felt hunger, or the parching thirst, or pain, or vexing care.

Laid and reared so strongly as were the foundations and superstructures of this stupendous city, the ravages of time injured it but little. King after king had added to its marvels, till Nabuchodonosor, at length, filled the throne of the kingdom. Reader, who wouldst read of that king and his bright kingdom, turn to the pages of the Book of Books, and fix thy study on the fine scene which is there drawn by the pen of the inspired historian.

Terrace upon terrace rose the gardens of Babylon, wide as the province of an empire, and basking in the splendours of an eastern heaven. Amid court-yards of marble, grew the towery cedars, under whose shades gambolled the spotted panthers, beautiful and tamed. Fountains of water sprang up in the dazzled air, that dissolving at their summits, fell again in scintillated showers. Harmonies spread from every vista and avenue, and exquisite perfumes dulcified the air.

Herein walked Nabuchodonosor, the "king of kings," glorying in his heart. As the sun poured huge streams of rose, and crimson, and golden light, upon the enormous city, spreading out like an emblazoned map below, the heart of Nabuchodonosor, as he gazed from those lofty terraces, viewing the grandeurs of his "golden" city, dilated with arrogance. Swollen with immeasurable haughtiness, he cried, "Is not this great BABYLON that I have built for the House of the Kingdom, by the might of *my* power, and for the honor of *my* majesty."

But God, who is a jealous God, and bears not the pride of those who arrogate to themselves the power, without rendering unto Him his rightful ascription of praise, heard the words of the boaster, and put a prophecy into the mouth of a prophet. And on the morrow, he who had vaunted with the vain-glory of a proud Lucifer, was found as a beast of the field.

Now was the glory of Babylon at its topmost, when perils and great warnings began darkly to environ it. The shadows of its palaces and temples seemed to gather more sombrously and black—portentous dreams visited the sleeps of its kings—lugubrious voices prophesied from its towers, and lastly, a supernatural hand wrote characters of fire and of wrath upon its walls.

It was at this period, and in fulfilment of the prophecies, that Cyrus broke asunder its gates of brass, and couched himself on the throne of Assyria. Under the dominion of this stranger-prince, curiosity is eager to know the appearance of this redoubtable city, and from the books of Herodotus, nearly all that is to be found of it appears.

Cyrus, after his subjugation of Babelon, extended over it the sceptre of his dominion, in common with the other cities of Asia under his sway, while all the nations who were his tenantry, were obliged to maintain him and his army. The country of Babelon alone, was obliged to maintain him four months of the year; its fertility, therefore, yielded a third of the produce of Asia. The government of this country, which the Persians termed *satrapy*, was richer and more extensive than any of the rest. Besides the war-horses, it maintained a stud of eight hundred stallions and sixteen thousand mares. Four of its cities alone, were devoted to keeping the Indian dogs, which, in immense numbers, were bred in this province for the king: these cities, in return, were exempt from all tax and tribute.

Seldom it rained over the country of Babelon. By the waters of the "great river"—the river Euphrates, which was here diffused by human industry, as is the Nile over Egypt by nature, the earth was artificially moistened: for all the country was divided by canals, the greatest of which was navigable, and flowed from south to north, from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Finer country stands not in the world for corn; but, for producing trees, the fig-tree, vine, or olive, it was not famous. Luxuriant, in troth, it was in grain, for it commonly yielded a hundred times more than what was sown, and in good years, it yielded three hundred times more than it received. Four inches broad were the leaves of its wheat and barley. "Though I know," says Herodotus, "that the millet and and the sesame of

that country grow to the size of trees, I will not describe them particularly, lest those who have not been in Babylon, should think my account fabulous."

Oil they had none but what they made from Indian corn. Spontaneously in every direction, sprung the palm-trees, and from the fruit which they bore, the people made bread, wine, and honey. Their palms and their fig-trees they cultivated in the same manner. Some of them, as of other trees, the Greeks called *male* ones. They tied the fruit of the male to the trees which bore dates, that the mosquito, leaving the male, might cause the date to ripen, by penetrating it; for, without that assistance, it did not come to maturity. Mosquitoes bred in the male palms as in the wild fig-trees.

But their boats of skins were the most surprising, in which they sailed along the river to Babylon. The Armenians, whose country lay north from Babylon, were said to be the inventors of these. They made them with poles of willow, which they bent, and covered with skins—the bare sides of the skins they put outwards, and made them so tight that they resembled boards. These boats had neither prow or stern, but were of a round form like a buckler. They put straw on the bottom. Two men, each with an oar, rowed them down the river, laden with different wares, but chiefly with palm-wine. Of these boats, some were very large, and some very small; the largest carry the weight of five hundred talents. There was room for an ass in one of their small boats—they put many into a large one. When they had unloaded, after their arrival at Babylon, they sold the poles of their boats and the straw, and loading their asses with the skins, returned to Armenia; for they could not sail up the river, its current being so rapid. For this reason, they made their boats of skins instead of wood; and on their return to Armenia with their asses, they applied the skins to their former use.

As for the dresses of the people of this place, they wore a linen shirt which came down to their feet. Over this they wore a woollen robe—their outer garment was a white vest. Their shoes resembled those of the Thebans. They let their hair grow. On their heads they wore a turban. They rubbed their bodies all over with fragrant liquors. Each man had a ring on his finger, and an elegant cane in his hand, with an apple on the top, or a rose, a lily, or an eagle, or some other figure; for they were not suffered to use canes without devices.

They embalmed their dead with honey, and their mourning was like that of the Egyptians. They counted their day from sunrise to sunrise. They solemnized five days of the year with great magnificence, and almost the same ceremonies with which the Romans celebrated their Saturnalia.

There were Babylonian tribes who lived only upon fish, and who prepared them in the following manner:—They dried them in the sun, and then beat them in a mortar to a kind of flour, which, after they had sifted through linen, they baked into rolls.

Confiding in judicial astrology, the priests of Babylon, who openly professed that art, were obliged to commit to writing all the events of the lives of their illustrious men, and on a fancied connection between those events and the motions of the heavenly bodies, the principles of their art were founded.

W. A.

KOORDS CATCHING QUAILS.

"I was made acquainted with a curious enough way they have have of catching quails, and which I do not remember to have seen described. A man, choosing a place where they abound, spreads a net over the grass or stubble, in such a manner, that the birds can run into, but not through it; and then, taking his cloak, he spreads it above his head by means of two sticks, in such a fashion, as to double in appearance his natural size and stature. Thus disguised, he goes poking along until he sees a quail upon the ground, when, bending forward, he drives it before him; and the spectre-like hood he carries, overshadowing the creature, so terrifies it, that it does not dare to take wing, but keeps running forward; a movement of the hood to one side or the other serves to direct the course of the unfortunate bird, which soon runs right under the net and is caught. In this odd manner, a great many quails are taken, and one may see dozens of men with their cloaks stuck over their heads, in the manner I have described, employed on a fine evening in the fields at this pastime."—*Travels in Koordistan, Mesopotamia, &c., by J. Baillie Fraser.*

TEMPERATURE OF FISHES.*

Whatever may be the physical temperature of fishes, there is nothing in their history more remarkable than their power of enduring the extremes of heat and cold. The breeding powers of that brilliant species of Chinese carp, commonly called the gold-fish, are greatly accelerated by water kept at a constant temperature of 80° Fahr.; yet Mr. Hoste, a naturalist of Vienna, has seen that species recover freely after being frozen up in ice. Fishes exist naturally in various baths and thermal springs, of which the temperature ranges from 113 to 120 degrees; and Humboldt and Bonpland were witness in South America, to fishes being thrown up alive, and apparently in good health, from the bottom of a volcano, along with water and heated vapour, which raised the thermometer to 210°, that is, to within two degrees of the boiling point.

* The Rod and the Gun. By James Wilson. Edinburgh. 1840. [Black.]

New Books.

The Harrowing of Hell, a Miracle Play: with an Introduction, Translation, and Notes, by J. O. Halliwell, Esq., F. R. S. [John Russell Smith.]

It is well observed by the erudite and truly indefatigable Editor, in his Introduction to the above highly curious Miracle Play:—"Those who take a real interest in the theatrical representations of our country, will willingly be at the pains to peruse the earliest existing dramatic composition in the English language. Such is the 'Harrowing of Hell,' a most singular specimen of the difference between the taste of our ancestors of the fourteenth century and our own.

* * * * * * * Its extreme curiosity and intrinsic historical value, ought to place the consideration of its poetical beauties entirely out of the scale; and I venture to hope, that the modern version which accompanies this most interesting relic of our forefathers, will contribute its mite to render the history of the stage interesting, at least, to performers themselves, if not to the public at large.

"Different portions of the Old and New Testament and of the Apocryphal writings," continues Mr. Halliwell, "were made the subject of popular dramatic exhibition, in more ancient times, by the priests themselves, and afterwards by trading laymen. The sacred nature of the subject, was, in itself, an attraction for the ignorant speculators, in times of intellectual slavery; and the ridiculous poetry which graces, or disgraces, the several Scripture characters in all these early dramas, is one proof, among many, of the lamentable state of mind among the large majority of the people of those days. Let us take, for instance, the following dialogue between Noah and his wife, which occurs in the series of miracle-plays formerly acted at Chester.*

Noah.

Wife, come in! Why standest thou there?
Thou art ever forward, I dare well swear,
Come in, in God's name, half time it were,
For fear lest thou should'st drown.

Noah's Wife.

Yea, Sir, set up your sail,
And row forth with evil hail;
For, without fail, I will not out—
out of this town.
Unless I have my gossips every one,
One foot farther I will not go—
They shall not drown, by Saint John!
If I may save their life.
They loved me full well, by Christ!
And if thou wilt not let them go into that chest,
Go forth, Noah, wherever you like,
And get thee a new wife.

Noah.

Son Shem, lo! thy mother is near;
By God, such another I do not see.

* MS. Harl. 2013. "I have given these extracts," says Mr. Halliwell, "as much as possible, in modern phraseology."

Shem.

Father, I will fetch her in, I trow,
without any fail·
Mother, my father after thee sends,
And prays thee to go into yonder vessel.
Look up, and see the wind;
For we be ready to sail.

Noah's Wife.

Shem, go again to him. I say
I will not go therein to-day.

Noah.

Come in, wife, in twenty devils' way,
Or else stand there all day.

Ham.

Shall we all fetch her in?

Noah.

Yea, sons, for Christ's sake and mine,
I would ye do it quickly,
For of this flood I am in doubt.

Noah's Wife.

The flood comes flowing in full fast,
On every side that spreads full far;
For fear of drowning I am aghast,
Good gossips let us draw near.
And let us drink ere we go,
For oft times we have done so;
For at a draught thou drinkest a quart,
And so will I do, ere I go.
Here is a bottle full of Malmsey good and strong,
It will rejoice both heart and tongue:
Though Noah think us never so long,
Yet we will drink alike.

Japhet.

Mother, we all of us beseech you—
For we are here, your own children—
Come into the ship for fear of the weather,
And for his sake that died for you.

Noah's Wife.

That will I not for your call,
Unless I have my gossips all.

Shem.

In faith, mother, thou shalt,
Whether thou wilt or not.

Noah.

Welcome, wife, into this boat.

Noah's Wife.

Take that for thy note!
(*Slaps his face.*)

Noah.

Ha! ha! Marry, this is hot—
It is good for to be still.

"Can anything more grotesque or absurd be imagined!" observes the learned commentator, "and yet this is a genuine specimen of what were the leading and grand tragedies of the time—spectacles which served to impart to the populace, some idea of those divine histories, from the perusal of which, they were precluded, owing to their ignorance of the Latin tongue.

"The legend of the descent of Christ into hell to rescue thence the souls of the good,—founded upon the Apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus,—was a very favourite subject for illustration throughout the middle ages; and we, accordingly, find that it forms one of almost every known series of miracle plays, generally under the title of the 'Harrowing of Hell.' On this legend, the above play is founded."

We cannot quote farther from the enter-

taining introductory remarks to this play, but must refer the reader to the work itself, which abounds with most interesting matter; and to those of our friends who prize antiquarian lore, its perusal will prove a rare treat, and its possession a literary treasure.

This *brochure* is very neatly printed; the original text being given on one page, and rendered into modern diction, on the opposite one.

As a specimen of the style of this Miracle-Play, we give its

Epilogue.

May God, for the love of his mother,
Let us never go thither. (Hell)
Lord, by thy great mercy,
Grant us a place in heaven.
Let us never be rained
By any sin—Christ's chosen.
Oh! bring us out of the pain of hell,
Lord, us and all thine.
And give us grace to live and die.
In thy service, and to heaven wend.—Amen.

LOCALITIES OF FEVER.

VIEW the broad fact all over the world, and the scrutiny will shew, that where there is decaying vegetable or animal matter, heat and moisture will render them noxious to life; that, in general, where there are marshes and swamps, there the higher animals languish, and the traveller sees nothing in these oppressive solitudes but a few wretched beings, stunted in growth, dull in mind, trailing after cattle as poor and as miserable as themselves. Amidst the stagnant waters of Bresse, the plains of Forez, the Campagna of Rome, the Pontine Marshes, in the Lagoons of the Mediterranean shores, the general aspect is ever the same—a dank and noisome vegetation in a grey expanse, unbroken by movement, either from bough or beast—and a heavy, clinging air, overwhelming the most buoyant spirits. In the Greek Islands, generally, the most marshy are the most insalubrious—for, instance, St. Maura, with its shallow lagoon. In the West Indian Islands, the same holds good; St. Lucia, Dominica, Tobago, are filled with uncultivated tracts, where deep ravines hold in stagnant pools, the spoils of a tropical vegetation, accumulated for centuries. In these islands, fevers are fatally abundant; while in St. Vincent's, Antigua, and Barbadoes, where the drainage is good, the valleys open to the breeze, the land better cultivated, the vegetation less dense, the mortality is diminished. Where the marshes have been drained or deepened, there also, as in the Ionian Islands, disease has invariably diminished. These facts hold forth a promise, that, in the combat with nature, man may immeasurably better the condition of his existence if he persevere unceasingly.—*Public Health and Mortality, Quarterly Review*, No. CXXXI, p. 153.

CHURCH STEEPLES.*

THE purpose of the steeple is simply external. Its object is to arrest the eye, or with its bells, to address the ear, of the devout Christian; to shew him where, and tell him when, he may offer up his prayers and praises amid the assemblage of the faithful. Those pinnacles, clustering round its base, may indeed, be said to symbolise the congregation of penitents at the foot of Mercy; while the crockets on its ascending lines, not inaptly typify the prayers that "fly upward." But the sentiment suggested by the spire, is not only of ascent. Its "fine-less" point, connecting heaven and earth, not only figures the terminated course of man's supplication, but also the source of his hope: and, instead of regarding the spire as rising towards the throne of Mercy, we may apply it to the illustration of Divine forgiveness descending from that throne; as symbolising the ever-expanding capacity of God's love—of that "unity" which "beginning in the prince" above, diffuseth itself over all below, like the "precious ointment that ran down even to the skirts of Aaron's clothing." The sentiment, then, excited in our mind by the Gothic pointed cathedral, is that of a reciprocal motion between heaven and earth. The building is as a tree, thriving upwards, to encounter the fruitful showers and sunshine which descend from above. However perfect in its general outline or minutest decoration, it seems still to be growing. Each stage of the buttress looks like the shoot of the season; and each pinnacle and canopy appears to teem with buds of promise.

Fine Arts.

METROPOLITAN GALLERY OF ARTS.

IT is proposed to erect a gallery that will be available to any artist who may choose to pay a rental of so much per foot for a space of wall, if he be a painter, or of floor, if a sculptor: the wall-space to be apportioned perpendicularly—that is, from floor to ceiling—to prevent the monopoly of space along the line of the eye. Each artist to be absolute master of such space for one year; during which time, he shall be at liberty to occupy it with any work he pleases. *The public to be admitted free;* by tickets, easily obtainable; and the exhibition to continue open the whole year, with the exception of a few stated days for arranging the works. Mr. Park, the sculptor, is the proposer of this plan, which, if fairly tried, would be productive of the greatest advantages to young artists, and also to the public; we heartily wish it every possible success.

* From the Palace of Architecture, a Romance of Art and History. By George Wightman, Architect. [Fraser.]

The Naturalist.

SWEET PLANTS OF ARABIA.

Arabia has been in all ages celebrated for sweet-scented shrubs and trees; and Burckhardt mentions, that one morning, at sun-rise, when he was on his road from Tayf to Mecca, every tree and shrub exhaled a delicious fragrance.

The Balm-tree is peculiar to Arabia: though it has not a beautiful appearance, and its qualities are unappreciated in the southern province of Yemen, yet its wood is burnt for the delicious perfume which it yields.

The Balsam is collected by the inhabitants in the Hedjaz, who take it to Mecca; it is thence exported to Turkey, where it is in high estimation. The tree from which incense distils, is found in part of Hadramaut, along the shores of the Indian ocean.

The Sensitive Plant.—Of this there are various species, of which the splendid flowers, of a beautiful red, are formed into crowns for festive occasions.

The Sugar Cane is found scattered over the whole of its provinces. Europeans can scarce form an idea of the luxury of its liquid syrup.

The Melon is in such variety and abundance, that, for a part of the year, it constitutes an article of food.

The Roses in the gardens of Tayf, among the mountains, 72 miles east of Mecca, are of such exquisite beauty and fragrance, that they are absolutely renowned, and are sent to all parts of the country.

The Coffee-Plantations, which, in many cases form the staple article of the agriculturist, exhale, when in flower, a most delicious perfume.

In speaking, however, of these delightful productions, we must confine ourselves for the most part to the southern and mountainous provinces of Yemen and Hadramaut. This is the celebrated Arabia Felix, which, contrasted with the adjacent deserts, might well deserve that appellation, being a fertile country, yielding the far-famed productions of myrrh and frankincense, and many sweet-scented shrubs and trees, of which the delicious fragrance, according to the description of poets, was wafted by the winds over the surrounding seas. Hallowed, too, by scriptural remembrances, it may not be forgotten, that from these regions of loveliness, the kings, or Magi, travelled, who sought with their presents of spices, and gold, and odours, a lovelier and serener Star, than had ever yet sparkled on the brow of the firmament.

SIEGES OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

This celebrated metropolis, the *Anthusa*, or blooming maiden of the Greeks, and the Ummedünja, or mother of the universe, as it is styled by the Turks, has been visited with the horrors of nine-and-twenty sieges. The subsequent list is an enumeration of their successive occurrence.

B. C. 477. Besieged by Pausanias after the battle of Platea.
410. By Alcibiades, in the beginning of the fifth cent., anno. 410, or 411.
347. By Leo, Philip's general.

A. D. 197. By the Emperor Septimius Severus.
313. By Maximius Cæsar
315. By Constantine the Great.
616. By Chosroes of Persia, under Heraclius, emperor of the East.
626. By the Chachan of the Avari, an ally of Chosroes.
656. By Moawia, the general of Ali, an Arab sovereign.
669. By Jesid, a son of Moawia.
674. By Sofian Ben-Auf, one of Moawia's generals.
719. By two sons of Caliph Merwan, when Anthemios was emperor.
744. By Solyman, a son of Caliph Abdolmelek.
764. By Paganos, the Kral of the Bulgarians, under Constantine V.
786. By Haroun-al-Raschid, under Leo IV.
798. By Abdolmelek, a general of Haroun-al-Raschid.
811. By Krumus, the despot of the Slavonians.
890. By Thomas, the Slavonian, under Michael the Stammerer.
896. By the Russians, under Ascold and Dir.
914. By Simeon, Kral of the Bulgarians.
1048. By Tornicius the rebel, under Michael Monomachos.
1091. By Alexius Comnenus, on Good Friday.
1204. By the Crusaders, on the 12th of April.
1261. By Michael Palæologus, on the 25th of July.
1396. By Bajazet, the lightning flash. The first Ottoman siege.
1402. By the same.
1414. By Musa, a son of Bajazet.
1422. By Amurath II., a son of Mahomet I.
1453. 29th of May, by Mahomet II., "the Conqueror of Constantinople;" against whose victorious host, Phrauza tells us, Constantine Dragofes Palæologus, the last Greek emperor, rushed forth exclaiming, "I would rather die than live;" and shortly afterwards perceiving himself deserted by his recreant followers, and crying aloud, "Is there no Christian hand to smite off my aching head?" met a glorious death, though doomed to fall by the cimetar of an infidel.

A CROCKERY-WARE FORTUNE.

The following story is extracted from the *Hetopadesa*, translated by Mr. Wilkins:—In the city of Devee-kotta, there was a Brahmin, whose name was Deva-Sarma. One lucky evening, having found a curious dish, he took it with him into a potter's warehouse which was full of earthenware, and throwing himself upon a bed which happened to be there, began to express his thoughts upon the occasion, in the following manner. "If I dispose of this dish, I shall get ten kapardakas* for it; with that sum I will purchase a number of pots and pans, the sale of which will increase my capital so much, that I shall be enabled to lay in a large stock of cloth and other merchandize, which having disposed of at a great advance, I shall have accumulated a lack of money. I will then marry four wives; and from among these, I will select the handsomest, with whom I will amuse myself. This will create jealousy; so when the rival wives shall be quarrelling, then will I, overwhelmed with anger, hurl my stick at them, thus!" Saying which, he flung his walking-stick out of his hand with such force, that he not only broke his curious dish, but likewise destroyed a number of pots and pans in the shop. W. G. C.

* Cowries.

The Gatherer.

The Edinburgh Monument to Sir Walter Scott.—The foundation stone was laid with the usual ceremonies by the Lord Provost, as Grand Master Mason, on Saturday last, on the site selected in Prince's Street Garden.

The invention of enamelling in China, is, in France, generally attributed to Bernard Palizzi.

He that has lost his fortune is, in the world's eye, so completely changed, that to the society which cherished him once, he is utterly invisible and unremmemberable. When he rises into the upper light of power and renown, his features will re-assume their once-known aspect, and men will find out that they are his dearest friends.

The Portrait of Dante, painted by Giotto, was discovered on the 23d of last month, at Florence, in the chapel of the Palazzo del Podesta, now called del Bargello, —the only other authentic likeness of the poet, which existed in Santa Croce, being irretrievably lost. It was covered with plaster of Paris, but is well preserved. The poet is drawn in the flower of his age, and has a majestic expression of countenance. Besides this, there have been also discovered portraits of Brunetto Latini, and Corso Donati, and of other unknown personages.

It was mentioned that a certain confectioner thickened his isinglass with dissolved parchment, whereupon a wit observed, that some fierce people made you eat your *words*, but that he ate his *deeds*.—*Memoirs of James Smith.*

Columns of Seville.—It has been calculated that 80,000 marble columns exist in Seville, but there assuredly must be a much larger number, for many are buried in the walls, others covered with plaster, and, on an average, every house possesses six.—*Standish's Seville.*

The Glow-worm possesses the curious property of causing its light to cease at will. Dr. Burmeister mentions that while catching some of the flying species in his hat, they have so suddenly and entirely ceased to shine, that he has fancied that they must have escaped.

Laws are as liable to breakage as the frailest china—as often broken as the commonest crockery.

Animal Magnetism.—The congregation of the Holy Office at Rome, having applied to the Pope, to know if animal magnetism was lawful, and if penitents might be permitted to be operated upon, his holiness has replied, that the application of principles and means purely physical to things and effects which are supernatural, for the purpose of explaining them physically, is nothing but an unlawful and heretical deception.

Sir David Wilkie the painter, left, last week, for Munich, whence he descends the Danube, proceeds into Syria, and visits Jerusalem and other sacred places.

Sooloh, a Mountain in Abyssinia.—Half way up, stands an insulated rock, the site of an Asaworta tradition. A freebooter who had kidnapped a Tugreye girl, in order to sell her at Massawwa, was so enchanted with the beauty of his newly-acquired slave that he offered to restore her to liberty if she would dance on the shelving summit of this rock. The favourite dance consists of slow movements of the arms and feet, and each pause is performed by bending backwards to a fearful extent. The Abyssine maiden accepted the trial, danced on the brink of the precipice, and was restored to her family. The rock is still called, The Dance of Lamino's Daughter.

Mankind deem that genius greatest which is most unshapely, as a structure loooks larger when it is irregular. Comets attract more attention than the vaster star which never wanders.

Nil Abiad.—Some particulars have arrived relative to the inhabitants about the White River, discovered by the late expedition. The people, divided into *Kabyles* or tribes, are governed by a sort of king, distinguished by wearing a shirt, all his subjects being entirely naked. That they may sleep warm, they are described as in the habit of lying on hot ashes. They at first refused to supply the expedition with provisions, but when a fire was commenced from the boats, which killed some of them, they thought that the people in the boats were all sons of God; accordingly, they began to pray to them, and to carry to them most respectfully whatever they possessed.

Roman Crookedness.—Many of the women in Rome, of the middling and lower classes, have one shoulder higher than the other. This is attributed to a custom among the Roman mothers of thumping the backs of their young female children, in order to make them grow.

An Old Lady's Notion of Ministerial Changes.—In my time, there was Lord North, and the South-sea bubble, and Billy Pitt, the Tory, and Charley Fox, Mr. Perceval, and Bellingham, and Lord Liverpool, and Castlereagh, and Canning. Oh dear! I forget who they all were, and what they talked about; they talked a great deal, and made a great noise, and all the time the people cried, "Change me the ministers," and grumbled; and then, after one change, "Change me them again," and they grumbled; and so, change and grumble, change and grumble; and the only thing they did *not* change *was their grumble:* and so it has been always. I do not hear as much as I used, but I dare say they grumble all the same.

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